

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

With this Amendment, Applicant cancels claims 6 and 13 without prejudice or disclaimer and amends claims 1, 7, 12, and 14. Additionally, Applicant adds new claim 15. No new matter is added. Therefore, claims 1-5, 7-12, 14 and 15 are all the claims currently pending in the present application. Based on the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, Applicant requests reconsideration of the application and allowance of the claims.

I. Rejection of Claims 1, 3, 8-12 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1, 3, 8-12 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Lindquist et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,579,347; hereinafter "Lindquist").

In the Office Action, the Examiner has correctly conceded that none of the cited references (nor Applicant's admitted prior art (APA)) teach or suggest the features of claim 6 in combination with the features of claim 1. (See paragraph 7 on page 8 of the Office Action) As such, Applicant has canceled claim 6 without prejudice or disclaimer and amended independent claim 1 to include the recitations of canceled claim 6. Applicant therefore respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the § 102(b) rejection of independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Regarding independent claim 12, the Examiner correctly concedes that none of the cited references nor the APA teach or suggest the features of claim 13 in combination with the features of claim 12. (See paragraph 7 on page 8 of the Office Action) In this regard, Applicant herein cancels claim 13 without prejudice or disclaimer and amends independent claim 12 to include the recitations of canceled claim 13. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the § 102(b) rejection of independent claim 12.

Since independent claim 14 has been herein amended to include features analogous to, though not necessarily coextensive with, the features of amended claims 1 and 12, Applicant submits that the neither the cited references nor the APA teaches or suggests the features of independent claim 14. Applicant therefore respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the § 102(b) rejection of independent claim 14.

II. Rejection of Claim 2 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) & Rejection of Claims 4-5 Under § 103(a) in view of APA

Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lindquist. Additionally, claims 4-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lindquist in view of APA. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2, 4 and 5 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency from independent claim 1. Given that independent claim 1 contains features not taught or suggested by the cited references or the APA (as correctly conceded by the Examiner) Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of dependent claims 2, 4 and 5.

III. New Claim

Applicant has added new claim 15 in order to more fully cover various aspects of Applicant's invention as disclosed in the specification. Since claim 15 contains features that are analogous to, though not necessarily coextensive with, the features recited in independent claims 1, 12 and 14 (as amended herein), Applicant submits that claim 15 is patentable at least for similar reasons.


IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims of the present application are in condition for allowance. It is respectfully requested that a Notice of Allowance be issued in due course. Examiner Wang is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney to resolve any remaining issues in order to expedite examination of the present application.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

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